

**The Manager
Forward Planning Dept
Galway County Council
Aras an Chontae
Prospect Hill
Galway**



27 July 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Re submissions for draft County Plan (GCP) 2022/28 Reopening of The Western Rail Corridor

I wish to make a submission in favour of the re-opening of **The Western Rail Corridor(WRC)**

The Western Rail Corridor is a vital piece of national infrastructure being as it is a major part of The Atlantic Rail Corridor (ARC) connecting Sligo, Claremorris, Tuam, Ballyglunin, Athenry, Craughwell, Ardahan, Gort Ennis, Limerick, Limerick Junction Mallow, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Athy and onwards to Dublin.

The WRC crosses the Dublin-Galway line at Athenry which is the hub for commuters from Tuam going

- 1) West to Galway City,
- 2) East to Dublin,
- 3) North to Sligo &
- 4) South to Limerick, Cork & Waterford.
- 5) The WRC also crosses the Dublin-Westport/Ballina line at Claremorris and joins the Dublin-Sligo line at Collooney

So one can see from the above that the WRC is not just an important piece of the national rail transport infrastructure (NRTI) but an essential component of the NRTI

Michael Martin on 2nd June last has described the new €185 million upgrade of Cork's railways as a gamechanger for Cork.

Transport Minister Eamon Ryan said that as part of the government's €1bn recovery plan, this will be, quote "a commuter line that will not just run from Cobh, but from Midleton to Mallow (which is the same distance as Tuam to Galway 22 miles) running through Kent Station putting in new stations in time, the likes of Tivoli and Blarney and Kilbarry & other locations" Unquote

So it follows applying the same (Co Cork) logic to Galway & its environs reopening the WRC would lead to more transport housing led development on land not to mention industrial development beside existing stations increasing commuter connectivity which would act as the catalysts to private developers building more badly needed housing stock along the WRC.

The advantages of reopening the WRC are as follows:

- 1) The Western Rail Corridor **infrastructure is already there** & just needs to be reopened, upgraded & reinstated (see the excellent Report by Professor John Bradley)
- 2) WRC as an **Economic Growth Generator**: Rail transport is a proven catalyst for economic growth. The reopening of the WRC will have direct benefits economically for towns like Athenry, Ballyglunin, Tuam, Milltown if they are to prosper as well as opening up the West & North West
- 3) **Added Convenience, Options, choices for Commuters & workers from Tuam** for work opportunities in Galway, Limerick or Sligo when & if they could avail of a high speed commuter service using Athenry as the designated railway interrail hub to eg travel into Galway City
- 4) **Dependable** Rail transport is the proven safest form of transport
- 5) **Green Energy**: Railways worldwide are being electrified (France & Japan are the innovative leaders in this mode of interconnectivity) as the world moves away from fossil fuels & carbon power sources. Railways lend themselves to green energy solutions and are ideally suited to this. Thus more High speed rail is the proven way to go in the future and help comply with **The Renewable Energy set rules Directive for the EU** (& Ireland) to achieve its 32% renewables target by 2030
- 6) **Increased Inter country Connectivity** The WRC feeds into Ireland's **National Rail Transport Grid (NRTG)** allowing circumnavigation of Ireland by intercity rail connecting of Ireland 5 existing Conurbations, Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Limerick Galway & the aspirational (as previously promised by past & present governments) new additional the proposed Northwest Conurbation of Sligo and or Letterkenny
- 7) **Rail is proven High Speed over longer Distances** thus WRC is the best mode of transport bar airways
- 8) WRC like most Railway transport is economical, quicker and **best suited for carrying heavy and bulky goods over long distances.**
- 9) Rail is a **cheaper mode of transport** as compared to other modes of transport. Most of the working expenses of railways are in the nature of fixed costs. Every increase in the railway traffic is followed by a decrease in the average cost. Rail transport is economical in the use of labour also as one driver and one guard are sufficient to carry much more load than the motor transport.
- 10) **Railway is the safest form of transport.** The chances of accidents and breakdowns of railways are minimum as compared to other modes of transport. Moreover, the traffic can be protected from the exposure to sun, rains, snow etc. Empirical

research, studies and various surveys over the years consistently show that rail is the preferred mode of transport for people with disabilities and older people

11) **Convenience & Accessibility** Reopening the WRC will make travel to our 5 major cities and Sligo more convenient as all the railway stations are situated in the middle of the cities

12) **Larger Capacity**: The carrying capacity of the railways is extremely large. Moreover, its capacity is elastic which means it can easily be increased by adding more wagons as & when needed

13) **Public Welfare**: Railways perform many public utility services. Their charges are based on 'charge what the traffic can bear' principle which helps the poorer sections of society

The reopening of the WRC is supported by all the main political parties.

The WRC is of national importance and should be left as a railway the purpose it was intended for until the WRC is reopened

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission

Yours sincerely

Mark Cassidy

Redacted
personal
information